

NEWSPLASH

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Ensuring Pool Skimmer Compliance

By Coy Watts, Permitting Engineer

This coming season, there will be an inspection of swimming facility skimmers to insure compliance with pool regulations. Therefore, it is very important that each facility examine their pool's skimmers to make sure that they already meet regulation requirements.

A properly functioning swimming pool must have some form of surface-skimming device. This can either be achieved by using skimmers or a gutter type system. In this article, we will discuss surface skimmers. Since surface skimmers are an integral part of the pool recirculation system, it is very critical that the proper equipment type and number be installed.

"During the 2003 pool season there will be an inspection of each facility's skimmers to ensure compliance with state regulations and National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certification requirements."

The pool regulation requires that all surface skimmers for commercial/public use be certified by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF). All skimmers are required to have a proper equalizer pipe located at least one foot below the lowest skimmer

level. In addition, the skimmer must have a valve or equivalent device that will remain tightly closed during normal operating conditions, but will automatically open when the water level drops below the lowest skimmer level. This last function is made possible with the aid of a float valve assembly. Therefore, a skimmer would not be considered approved without the installation of the equalizer valve. It must be noted that many skimmer manufacturers will make more than one version of a particular skimmer. However, to be NSF-approved for public use, the skimmer must have both the equalizer line and the float valve assembly.

During new pool construction, the skimmer design is closely reviewed and it is very easy to determine if a proper skimmer will be used. However, it is often more difficult at the construction and operation phase. At that time, ensuring compliance involves internal inspection of the skimmer. The Department has recently become aware that many skimmers were either installed incompletely or have been modified since installation. This modification involves the lack of a required float valve assembly.

If there are any questions related to this article, contact Coy Watts at 803-898-4257, or E-mail wattsem@dhec.sc.gov.

Have You Lost Your 2003 Pool Sticker?

We have many requests for replacement of swimming pool operating permit stickers that have been lost, stolen or destroyed.

A sticker number is assigned annually to each pool at a facility for which current annual operating fees have been received. If the sticker is lost, the fee receipt certificate letter may be used in its place. This letter should be laminated and posted in a conspicuous place on the premises such as by the pool rules sign, equipment room door or office door. The pool inspectors will recognize this as payment of your annual fee.

If you have lost your sticker and are unable to locate the fee receipt certificate letter in your file, contact Christie Davis at (803) 898-3819 or E-mail daviscp@dhec.sc.gov.



Posters Offered Through the CDC

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has posters available for use by all swimmers, especially for parents with young children. The posters raise awareness about swimming-related illnesses. They also provide easy steps for protecting swimmers from illnesses. These materials can be downloaded or printed in custom 35 by 35 inch format, but can be adjusted to print in standard 8.5 by 11 inch format. To learn more about the materials available, visit the CDC's Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/posters.htm>, or call (800) 311-3435.

New Swimming Pool Regulation Affects Daily Operation

By Jim Ridge, Compliance Coordinator

The 2003 swimming season should be underway as you read this edition of *Newsplash*. Hopefully, you are now aware there have been some changes made in our S.C. swimming pool regulation since last summer. The Department has been highlighting these new requirements in various ways and recently mailed out over 3,000 copies of the new pool regulation to active pool owners. Changes that affect daily operation activities are listed below.

- Public pool owners are required to maintain daily water chemistry readings in a bound (meaning that the pages cannot be removed and replaced) and numbered book. This can be something as simple as a

spiral-bound notebook. You could also have current check sheets professionally bound by an office supply store. Some of the larger pool supply businesses have created bound pool logbooks for their customers, and the Department has books available by request. Whatever method you choose, just remember that the pages must be permanently bound with numbered pages in their proper order. At least one reading must be recorded each day you are open for swimming. A Certified Pool Operator (CPO) must initial the log book at least three times each week.

- The pool rules sign has additional rules and some new language. The older signs are no longer acceptable and may cause pool closure if used. A copy of the current pool rules can be found on page 20 of the regulation or by visiting our Web site at www.scdhec.net/water/html/recreation.html.

- There is now a sign required at pools and spas that do not have full-time lifeguards. It reads, "NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY—SWIM AT YOUR OWN RISK."

"NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY" must be in six (6) inch minimum height lettering and "SWIM AT YOUR OWN RISK" must be in at least four (4) inch high letters. Facilities are required to have two of these signs, unless DHEC staff has granted a local variance.

- CPOs **who must be licensed by the State of South Carolina** are now required to conspicuously place their name and certification number on, or adjacent to, the facility pool rules sign. If more than one CPO is used, then it is suggested that the name most frequently used in the pool log be the one posted for public notification. A pool may not remain open without a currently licensed CPO. No grace period will be given for this requirement.

- There are now specified minimum items required in the pool first aid kit. This list can be found on page two (2) of the new regulation for SC public swimming pools.

- Additional mandated "immediate closure" items for this season include:
 - Telephone/Emergency notification device not within 200' (ft) of pool and operational
 - Missing the "NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY (6") SWIM AT YOUR OWN RISK (4")" signs as required
 - Not having the CPO sign posted or added to pool rules sign.
 - Not meeting the S.C. Certified Pool Operator Requirement
 - Not having the bound and numbered pool log available and maintained daily
 - Not having an automatic controller operating (where required)
- The maximum temperature for spas has been lowered to 104° F.
- Current Department guidance documents for water contamination incidents (such as fecal contamination) must be followed unless DHEC staff has approved other plans for your facility.

Guidance documents may be found on the Department's web site at www.scdhec.net/water/html/recreation.html, or by picking up copies from your local DHEC office.

- Type "A" and "E" facilities, including commercial waterparks, are no longer required to maintain shepherds crooks or Coast Guard approved throw rings if lifeguards are equipped with rescue tubes.

Please review each of these areas closely to make certain your pool or spa is in compliance with the new regulations. If you have questions about any area of pool construction or daily operation, contact your local Environmental Quality Control Office or the staff members listed on the back cover of this newsletter.

Let's all have a great swimming season!

Question Corner

Q: I use a different pool test kit than the DHEC inspector, and sometimes our readings don't agree. Whose reading is correct?

A: Obviously, there are limits and many different items built into most simple pool test kits. No one brand of kit reads chlorine/bromine or pH correctly under all conditions. However, when properly used, they will give us a fairly accurate picture of the pool water chemistry. DHEC inspectors are asked to accept your reading if different from their own as long as:

- you're using your kit per the specific instructions,
- the test kit uses the DPD method for testing halogen residual, and
- your test kit reagents and color comparator are in good condition.

The Department recommends that you contact your local professional pool equipment supplier if questions arise concerning your test kit readings or its accuracy.

Wading Your Way Through to the Information

Pool Resources Available

by Jim Ridge, Compliance Coordinator

As you can imagine, DHEC staff are literally flooded with pool questions during the summer months. These questions cover many different subjects. The items listed below provide resource ideas and contact information to help you find answers to your most difficult pool questions.

Water Quality Problems

Some pool operators experience difficulty in maintaining water quality. If this is true at your facility, you might try contacting a local pool service company. A local business that specializes in commercial pools will have a lot of information about typical water problems and solutions. Most will be happy to answer your questions without cost. Some pool professionals offer water testing on site for a modest fee.



Pool Operator Certification

Questions concerning Certified Pool Operator licensing (CPO) or test information should be directed to the SC Labor Licensing and Regulation, Environmental Certification Board. The general information number is (803) 896-4430. It may also be possible to get local CPO contact information if you are looking for a certified pool operator.

Pool Inspections

The local Environmental Quality Control Office can assist you with questions about pool inspections specific to your facility. Generally covering two to four counties, each office has a recreational waters program manager that can handle questions about your facility inspections and the inspector. You should also report any pool-related accident or injury to the local staff within 72 hours of the occurrence. The local office numbers are listed on the back of this newsletter.

Annual Operating Permit

If your annual operating permit (your orange pool sticker) is lost or somehow destroyed, Christie Davis in our data management section can help replace the sticker. Christie is also the

resource to use if you need to notify us about changing your billing or mailing address, contact person, or parent company. This information is needed in order to properly direct invoices and other important mailings. Christie can be contacted at (803) 898-3819.

Permitting

Pool permitting questions and "change order" information can be obtained from DHEC's pool permitting section. Please remember, if you are replacing your pool's original equipment, resurfacing your pool or deck, or modifying the pool from its original permitted design, this section should be notified before the work begins. Shawn Clarke serves as section manager and can be contacted at (803) 898-3544.

Compliance Assistance

Hopefully, you now are armed with the contact information to solve most any pool mystery. If you have a question that doesn't seem to fit in any area listed above, try calling Jim Ridge at (803) 898-4015. He can help with answers to general questions concerning public pool regulations or direct you to the right spot to find an answer.

Web site

Don't forget about our Web site that may have the information needed to answer your pool question. Visit us online at www.scdhec.net/water/html/recreation.html.

New Regulation Could Affect Change Order Requirements

By Coy Watts, Permitting Engineer

Often, a change order is required whenever work is performed on a public swimming pool. Exact replacement of originally approved pool plans is the only exception to needing a change order. The importance of getting proper change order approval cannot be stressed enough for the upcoming pool season. Many construction requirements for routine repairs have been modified due to recent regulation revisions. For example, any deck replacement must meet new depth marker requirements.

The change order form (3627) is a very short form that is easy to complete. The form must be completed, submitted and approved prior to work being performed on the pool.

A change order form may be obtained by:

- contacting your local Environmental Quality Control Office,
- contacting the permitting staff located in the Columbia central office, or

- downloading it from www.scdhec.net/water/html/recreation.html.

Once the form is filled out, it can be mailed or faxed to DHEC's Columbia office (fax number 803-898-4215). Usually, review can be completed in a few days. Once approved, the work may be started. Keep in mind that pool work costing over \$5,000 does require the use of a licensed pool contractor.

EQC District Offices

The local Environmental Quality Control (EQC) Office performs compliance inspections and can provide technical assistance. Check the numbers below for the office in your area.

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Appalachia I (<i>Anderson, Oconee</i>)..... | (864) 260-5569 |
| Appalachia II (<i>Greenville, Pickens</i>) | (864) 241-1090 |
| Appalachia III (<i>Spartanburg, Cherokee, Union</i>) | (803) 596-3800 |
| Catawba (<i>Lancaster, Chester, York</i>) | (864) 285-7461 |
| Central Midlands (<i>Richland, Lexington, Newberry, Fairfield</i>)..... | (803) 896-0620 |
| Low Country (<i>Beaufort, Jasper, Colleton, Hampton</i>) | (843) 846-1030 |
| Lower Savannah (<i>Aiken, Orangeburg, Barnwell, Bamberg, Allendale</i>)..... | (803) 641-7670 |
| Pee Dee (<i>Florence, Dillon, Marion, Marlboro, Darlington, Chesterfield</i>) | (843) 661-4825 |
| Trident (<i>Charleston, Berkeley, Dorchester</i>) | (843) 740-1590 |
| Upper Savannah (<i>Greenwood, Abbeville, Laurens, Saluda, Edgefield, McCormick</i>)..... | (864) 223-0333 |
| Waccamaw (<i>Horry, Georgetown, Williamsburg</i>) | (843) 448-1902 |
| Wateree (<i>Sumter, Kershaw, Lee, Clarendon, Calhoun</i>)..... | (803) 778-1531 |

DHEC Central Office Contact Numbers

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Main Telephone Number | (803) 898-4300 |
| Main Fax Number | (803) 898-4215 |
| For questions concerning construction permits and change orders, call Shawn Clarke | (803) 898-3544 |
| For questions concerning program policies and compliance issues, call Jim Ridge | (803) 898-4015 |
| For questions concerning operating permit fees and address changes, call Christie Davis | (803) 898-3819 |

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www.scdhec.net/water/html/recreation.html

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